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Letter dated 29 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the statement issued at Addis Ababa on 29 December 2000 by the Observer Team dispatched by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to observe the presidential elections held this month in the Sudan.

I should be grateful if you would have the statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly of the United Nations under agenda item 114, entitled "Human rights questions".

(*Signed*) Elfatih **Erwa**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Statement by the OAU Observer Team on the 2000 general elections in the Republic of Sudan

At the invitation of the General Elections Authority of the Republic of the Sudan and as part of the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to support the democratization process in Africa, the OAU Secretary General dispatched a Nine-member Team to observe the elections from 5th to 23rd December 2000 in the Sudan. The OAU Team, led by H.E Ambassador Pascal Gayama, observed the elections in various parts of the country.

Having witnessed various aspects of the electoral process, including administrative arrangements, campaigns and polling activities, and having held discussions with all five Presidential candidates as well as other parties, including those which boycotted the elections, the Team wishes to commend the General Elections Authority for the arrangements that allowed the Sudanese people, including those outside the country to freely exercise their democratic rights. The Team took note of the mechanism put in place to deal with the complaints on voting irregularities. Equally, the OAU Team wishes to congratulate the Sudanese people in general for their maturity, patience and the disciplined manner, which they manifested throughout the process.

The OAU Team, during its meetings with the candidates and political parties, took note of their concerns, such as the handling of the voters' rolls, the airtime accorded by the government television and radio stations, the high proposing and insurance fees charged to the sponsors and their candidates, inadequate time to prepare for the elections, lack of sufficient resources for the parties to participate effectively etc... The Team will transmit all the reported and observed problems together with some suggestions on how best to go about them, to the General Elections Authority in a more detailed report of the Team.

It is acknowledged that in a country of about 30 million people of the size of the Sudan, it was inevitable that there would be some logistical challenges. It is the Team's hope that many of these challenges will be overcome in future elections.

While noting that some major political parties boycotted the elections, it was encouraging however, that the leaders from all sides expressed their readiness and commitment to embark, after the elections, on a dialogue. This will hopefully bring about national reconciliation.

Given the above-mentioned observations and other prevailing circumstances, it is the view of the OAU Observer Team that the overall exercise was an important step towards democratization and that it was conducted in a conducive atmosphere and in a satisfactory manner.

The OAU Team takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to some African Diplomatic Missions, the Arab League, the Chad Delegation and the Arab Parliamentary Union for the friendly cooperation with the OAU Observers.

More important, the OAU Team would like to express its sincere thanks and gratitude to the General Elections Authority and the People of the Republic of the Sudan for the hospitality and close cooperation extended to it. The OAU would like to reaffirm its commitment to the promotion of the democratization process being undertaken by the People of the Sudan and will always be ready to render any possible assistance that may be required.

Finally, the Organization of African Unity wishes the Government and the People of the Republic of the Sudan lasting peace and continued prosperity.

Addis Ababa, December 29, 2000